

*Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit
Mary, Seat of Wisdom, Pray for us.*

**Vancouver Christ the King Monastery
Lecture 2: Wednesday, January 4 morning**

**Man and Woman in Medieval Philosophy and Renaissance Philosophy:
The Christian Experience of Complementarity**

Introduction

For over forty years I traced, from 750BC to the present, various ways philosophers had argued for unisex, polarity, and complementary theories without really understanding where it would end up. Along the way I sought to provide arguments to defend the balance of a complementarity theory, with its three essential components, equal dignity, significant difference and mutual gift in community. I always preferred the versions of complementarity theory over unisex theories or versions of polarity which suggested that either males or females were superior by nature over the other. But I was not sure how to prove that complementarity was the better theory.

Then in reading the life of John Henry Cardinal Newman, I discovered that he had written about the meaning of 'proof' in the context of the development of Christian Doctrine.¹ As I studied Newman's seven criteria for the development of a living idea, I realized in a flash, that the ideal of the integral complementarity of woman and man had the characteristics he had identified as providing an increased probability for proof of its truth. In Newman's words from *An Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine*: "When an idea, whether real or not is of a

¹ Ian Ker. *John Henry Newman: A Biography* (Oxford: University Press, 2009).

nature to arrest and possess the mind, it may be said to have life, that is, to live in the mind which is its recipient.”²

Blessed Cardinal Newman captured the experience of ‘working out the consequences of this kind of living idea, when he stated:

* This process, whether it be longer or shorter in point of time, by which the aspects of an idea are brought into consistency and form, I call its development, being the germination and maturation of some truth or apparent truth on a large mental field. On the other hand this process will not be a development, unless the assemblage of aspects, which constitute its ultimate shape, really belongs to the idea from which they start.³

Catholic philosophers have identified principles of complementarity building on the third and fifth clauses in the ninth article of the Apostles’ Creed: “I believe in the Communion of Saints...[and] the Resurrection of the Body...”

St. Augustine and Greek Philosophers’ Dialectic between Unisex and Polarity

The original type of idea for sex and gender complementarity came upon the scene in an historical context of Ancient Greek philosophy which had already well defined two alternatives to it. We previously considered Plato’s unisex theory and Aristotle’s traditional polarity theory which were the well defined two alternatives to complementarity.

Into this conflict in Greek philosophy between, on the one hand, a Platonic unisex theory which promotes the equality of woman and man but gets rid of all significant differentiation

² John Henry Cardinal Newman, *An Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine* (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, sixth edition, 1989), I.4, p. 36.

³ Newman, *An Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine*, I.5, p. 38.

and, on the other hand, an Aristotelian polarity theory which promotes the soul/body composite of a man and a woman, but gets ride of equality and instead argues systematically for the natural superiority of man over woman, St. Augustine (354-430) enters as a Christian convert who professes his belief in the resurrection of the body and the communion of saints.

Principle of complementarity: In the fourth century AD St. Augustine offers the first defense for a theory of complementarity when he considered the logical consequences of the Aristotelian foundation for polarity and Platonic foundation for unisex in relation to the Christian understanding of heaven. In the *City of God*, Book XII, chapter 17 Augustine argues:

There are some who think that in the resurrection all will be men, and that women will lose their sex. . . For myself, I think that those others are more sensible who have no doubt that both sexes will remain in the resurrection. . . In the resurrection, the blemishes of the body will be gone, but the nature of the body will remain. And certainly, a woman's sex is her nature and no blemish..."⁴

Here we have the first Catholic articulation of the two ~~of the~~ essential characteristics of complementarity, namely the equal dignity of women and men in heaven simultaneously held with their significant differentiation.⁵ The first two principles of the original type of the living idea of complementarity can be summarized simply as equal dignity and significant differentiation. Augustine identified the starting point of the living idea of complementarity of woman and man.

Cardinal Newman identified the starting point of a true living idea as follows:

Note of identity of type... whereas all great ideas are found, as time goes on, to involve much which was not seen at first to belong to them and have developments, that is enlargements, applications, uses and fortunes, very various, one security against error

⁴ Augustine, *The City of God Against the Pagans* (London and Cambridge, Mass.: William Heinemann, Ltd. and Harvard University Press, 1966), XII, 17.

⁵ St. Augustine also defended a woman's free will against a father who was trying to force his daughter to become Baptized, and to defend the dignity and purity of virgins who were raped against their will. See COW I 218-42.

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 ✕ and perversion in the process ⁶ is the maintenance of the original type, which the idea presented to the world at its origin amid and through all its apparent changes and vicissitudes from first to last.

The historical context of Ancient Greek philosophy has recently been characterized by Pope Benedict in his Regensburg Address, as not simply an accident for the development of Christian doctrine;

✕ The encounter between the Biblical message and Greek thought did not happen by chance. The vision of Saint Paul, who saw the roads to Asia barred and in a dream saw a Macedonian man plead with him "Come over to Macedonia and help us!" (cf. *Acts* 16:6-10) this vision can be interpreted as a "distillation" of the intrinsic necessity of a rapprochement between Biblical faith and Greek inquiry.⁷

What began in Greece, when both Plato and Aristotle took the concept of woman in relation to man as an important philosophical area of reflection, had elements of both truth and error for the history of the complementarity of woman and man. It has taken a long and arduous path of over two thousand five-hundred years before the errors have been purged from the original elements.

Although St. Augustine, following the principle of the supremacy of faith, realized that the fundamental equality and differentiation of women and men in heaven was more persuasive than Aristotelian justification of male superiority or Platonic versions of a unisex soul in cycles of reincarnation, he was not able to carry through the consequences of this insight throughout his philosophical writings. Influenced by Platonic and Aristotelian elements in the culture, he held a unisex theory for women who were nuns, and a traditional polarity theory for married women.

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 Four-hundred years after St Augustine, the Christian, John Scotus Erigena (810-877) drew upon Neoplatonic thought to argue that the original Adam was a unisex being, who through the Fall became male and female. Following out this logic, he concluded that at the Resurrection

⁶ Newman, *An Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine*, 207.

⁷ Pope Benedict XVI, "Faith, Reason, and the University," Meeting with the Representatives of Science," Aula Magna, University of Regensburg (September 12, 2006), par. 5.

all men and women will turn into a unisex kind of being.⁸ / The original idea of complementarity ↑
 was fragile and in need of a much deeper philosophical foundation / It will depend on other
Catholic philosophers to develop a thoroughly consistent complementarity. /

Deepening of Complementarity in Hildegard of Bingen (1098-1179)

In his analysis Blessed Cardinal Newman traced the process by which an original type of idea developed. In his words: ↓

[T]he increase and expansion of the Christian Creed and Ritual, and the variations which have attended the process in the case of individual writers and Churches, are the necessary attendants on any philosophy or polity which takes possession of the intellect and heart, and has had any wide or extended dominion; that, from the nature of the ✱ human mind, time is necessary for the full comprehension and perfection of great ideas; and that the highest and most wonderful truths, though communicated to the world once for all by inspired teachers, could not be comprehended all at once by the recipients, but, as being received and transmitted by minds required only the longer time and deeper thought for their full elucidation. This may be called the Theory of Development of Doctrine.⁹

The first Catholic thinker to provide a systematic defense for the concept of the complementarity of woman and man in all four categories of metaphysics, generation, wisdom, and virtue flourished in the Benedictine tradition of double monasteries. The Benedictine Abbess St. Hildegard of Bingen repeated in her own words the Augustinian insight about the implications of belief in the Resurrection of the body for the respective equality and ✱ differentiation of women and men: "Thus all men in the twinkling of an eye shall rise again in

⁸ John Scotus Erigena, *Periphyseon* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1976), #532-540.

⁹ Newman, *An Essay on the Development of Doctrine*, 29-30.

body and in soul without any contradiction of cutting off their members, but in the integrity of their bodies and their sex.”¹⁰

Hildegard was also a philosopher, and drawing upon a medieval theory of humors and elements she reordered Aristotle's hierarchical structure of the elements in which the two highest (fire and air) were associated with the male and the two lowest (water and earth) with the female, to bring in a balance of male (fire and earth) and female (air and water). She developed a thorough going analysis of the interaction of four different types of men and four different types of women, based on several material and spiritual factors. Not only did she considered the integration in a woman of biological factors such as blood, muscles, diseases, but she also considered psychic responses to particular kinds of men, and the quality of generativity in each type. Hildegard offered an analogous kind of analysis of men. This broke the stereotyped universal generalizations that had previously accompanied the Platonic unisex and Aristotelian polarity models of gender identity and began to open up the experiential range of women's and men's experience of the opposite sex.¹¹

[Appendix 2]

Hildegard's Approach to Sex Differentiation through natural science

Perspectives	male	human	female
"physics"	more of elements fire and earth	elements of fire, air, water, and earth	more of elements air and water
"chemistry"	less humours	humours of phlegm, blood, choler, and black bile	more humours
"biology"	deposits fertile seed	reproduces itself as living organism	warms and strengthens seed to termination

Hildegard's Four Types of Women

¹⁰ Francesca Marie Steele, *The Life and Visions of St. Hildegard* (London:Heath, Cranton and Ousely, Ltd., 1914), 176. See also COW I 301.

¹¹ Hildegard of Bingen, *Hielkunde (Causae et curae)* Salzburg: O. Muller Verlag, 1972), 140.

	Type I	Type II	Type III	Type IV
muscular structure	very heavy	moderately heavy	delicate	meagre
blood	clean, red	whiter	drier	slimy
colour of skin	clear and white	sullen	pale	dark
fertility	moderate	very	partial	rare
menses	light	moderate	heavy	very heavy
character	artistic, content	efficient, masculine, strict	intellectual, benevolent, loyal, chaste	unstable, ill-humoured
possible diseases after early menopause	depression, melancholy, side pains, unhealthy glandular secretions	insanity, problems with spleen, dropsy, tumours	paralysis, unbalanced, liver problems, cancer	abdominal pains, spinal sprains, early death
attitude towards men	charming and healthy when with men	driven by sexual desire for men	loyal but can not keep men's interest	happier without men

Hildegard's Four Types of Men

	Type I	Type II	Type III	Type IV
blood	fiery	fiery and airy	airy and black bile	weak in all respects
colour of skin	red hue	mixed red and white hue	sombre	unclean and pale
fertility	very	moderate	partial	infertile
character	hearty and hale	balanced	very dangerous, no moderation	weak, effeminate
children	tend to be unrestrained, course-mannered	balanced, happy, well-mannered	mean or evil children	no children
attitude towards women	treat women like sex objects	honourable and fruitful relations with women	physically abusive of and hateful towards women	indifferent towards women

In spite of the appearance of biological determinism that her analysis of elements, humours, and types seems to support, Hildegard defends the claim that a man or woman has free will. She states that "reason comes into flower" in relation to bodily organs, so "we can gather up

our free will and all our discipline so that we can master the attacks of the other humours and complete our action in a disciplined way.

Principle of synergetic relation: Hildegard's further important contribution to the development of complementarity was to say that "Man and woman are in this way so involved with each other that one of them is the work of the other [opus alterum per alterum]." ¹² Hildegard offers an analysis of the best type of relations between men of the second type and women, "With women they can have an honorable and fruitful relationship. Their eyes of such men can meet squarely with those of the women, much in contrast to those other men's eyes [first type] that were fixed on them like arrows." ¹³ Thus, in addition to arguing for the two first principles of equality and significant differentiation in all four categories, in both heaven and on earth, Hildegard also introduced the third essential characteristic of complementarity, namely the call into a synergetic relation between woman and man. For these reasons, I have called her the "foundress of ^{sex and} gender complementarity." ¹⁴

When we move to the next challenge in the 12-13th centuries for the development of the Catholic inspiration for gender complementarity, Cardinal Newman's descriptions of the development of Catholic doctrine provides us another apt characterization: "In such a method of proof there is, first, an imperfect, secondly, a growing evidence, thirdly, in consequence a delayed inference and judgment, fourthly, reasons producible to account for the delay." ¹⁵ A major set back in the history of complementarity occurred.

¹² Hildegard of Bingen, *Book of Divine Works* (Sante Fe: Bear and Co, 1987), I, iv. 100. 123

¹³ Hildegard of Bingen, *Hielkunde*, 140. See COW I 292-315.

¹⁴ See 'Hildegard of Bingen' in COW I 292-315.

¹⁵ Newman, *An Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine*, 123.

Refining Complementarity in St. Thomas Aquinas (1224-1274)

Shortly after Hildegard wrote her defense for the young and fragile idea of complementarity of man and woman, the idea was nearly struck down by the battle that ensued for the minds of the educated in Europe. This battle included the writings of the Islamic philosophers Al-farabi, Avicenna, and Averroes; the writings of Jewish philosophers Avicbron and Maimonides; and of the Catholics Anselm, Abelard, Heloise, and St. Albert the Great. With the Aristotelian Revolution in thought commentaries on and ^{Latin} translations of all of Aristotle's original texts, flooded into Europe so that by the mid 13th century the University of Paris's and all other universities founded during this period, adopted these translated texts of Aristotle's works, and required them for all who attended the Faculty of Arts. St. Albert and St. Thomas repeated some of Aristotle's polarity explanations in his *Summa Theologica*.

The Benedictine Monasteries which had produced the Abbess Hildegard of Bingen, had also been the centers for education for the previous four centuries, thereby providing a framework amenable for a theory of the complementarity of men and women, with its tradition of double-monasteries and monastic libraries. The new universities, however, were established for men only. This historical fact, combined with the traditional polarity theory of the Aristotelian corpus, collided with the idea of complementarity just being formulated by Catholic authors, and for the next several centuries the Aristotelian rational for the natural superiority of men over women reigned supreme once again. In particular, Aristotelian foundations the traditional polarity position, of the natural superiority of men over women, in all four categories of metaphysics, generation, wisdom, and virtue, was reinforced both by St. Albert the Great, Thomas Aquinas' teacher and by Giles of Rome, Thomas' student.

✓ In this context, it is particularly significant that St. Thomas Aquinas tried to modify some errors of the traditional polarity position and to provide a new foundation for the eventual complementarity of woman and man.

✓ Thomas developed Aristotle's principle of *hylomorphism*. He expanded Aristotle's notion of the human soul to include both being the form of the body and spirit. Thomas also introduced in the Summa Contra Gentiles the concept of commensuration of individual soul to a particular body to overcome Aristotle's polarity theory of generation of the female as a misbegotten male. It is this commensuration and the subsequent way that her form mediates her existence as a woman with this particular body and not that particular body that provides the basis for the metaphysical explanation of gender differentiation with out appealing to the hierarchical principle of contraries.

✓ **Msgr. John Wippel**, in his chapter on "Prime Matter and Substantial Form" offers a more detailed analysis of this crucial Thomistic meaning. He notes that Averroes, likely following Aristotle, had argued that there can be no matter in a substantial form, which is the definition of a species.¹⁶ Wippel concludes that for Thomas: "if form in some way communicates the substantial act of being (*esse*) and if a thing's unity follows upon its being, there can be only one substantial form in any given substance."¹⁷ He continues by pointing out that Thomas "argued that there are not two forms in the human soul but only one, which is its essence. **Hence it is through its essence that the human soul is a spirit and through that same essence that it is the form of the body.**"¹⁸

¹⁶ John F. Wippel, *The Metaphysical Thought of Thomas Aquinas: From Finite Being to Uncreated Being* (Washington DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 2000), 329.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 333.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 337. Bold my emphasis

The commensuration of soul to body proposal was first suggested by a Thomas Aquinas in Summa Contra Gentiles II:81. "...diversity, nevertheless, does not result from a diversity in the essential principles of the soul itself, nor from otherness in respect of the intelligible essence of the soul, but from diversity in the commensuration of souls to bodies, since this soul is adapted to this and not to that body, and that soul to another body, and so in all other instances.... Now it is as forms that souls have to be adapted to bodies."¹⁹ ✓

In addition, Thomas repeated the argument that at the Resurrection of the body, men and women would retain their equality and significant differentiation in heaven, thus arguing against both the errors of Platonic unisex and of Aristotelian traditional polarity. In the Summa Contra Gentiles, he states: "It is, then, contrary to the nature of the soul to be without the body.... Therefore, the immortality of souls seems to demand a further resurrection of the bodies."²⁰ ✓

Repeating Augustine's approach, Thomas argued, "One ought, nevertheless, not hold that among the bodies of the risen the feminine sex will be absent, as some have thought. For since the resurrection is to restore the deficiencies of nature, nothing that belongs to perfection of nature will be denied to the bodies of the risen. Of course, just as other bodily members belong to the integrity of the human body, so these which serve for generation---Not only in men but also in women. Therefore, in each of the cases members of this sort will rise."²¹

In addition, St. Thomas applied this theory to the relations of women and men on earth when he argued in his commentary on Aristotle's ethics against the polarity view that woman is the unequal friend of her husband. Instead, he stated that a wife had the greatest friendship with her husband in marriage.

¹⁹ Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Contra Gentiles* (Garden City, New York: Image, 1955), Book II: Q. 81, n. 8.

²⁰ Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Contra Gentiles* (New York: Benzinger Bros., 1923-29), IV, 79, 10.

²¹ *Ibid.*, IV, 83, 5.

Finally, we should also mention in passing another great contribution of St. Thomas to the discussion of man-woman relation. Aristotle had argued that relation is an accident of substance; but the Christian revelation of the Holy Trinity shows that relation is an essential characteristic of the three divine persons, described by St. Thomas as the four relations of paternity, filiation, procession, and common spiration. Boethius and others had struggled to explain how philosophical categories like substance and relation could be applied to the Trinity. Thomas realized that if relation is essential to the Divine Being, and man and woman are created in the image and likeness of God, then relation must be essential to woman and man as well. Father Norris Clarke, summarizes this as follows: "Relationality is, therefore, in principle for St. Thomas himself, an equally primordial dimension of being as substantiality. Let us say so explicitly."²² It took until after the advance of Catholic French personalism for this relationality to be developed explicitly, but the seed for it was planted by and in St. Thomas Aquinas.

Still at this early stage of the development of the living idea of complementarity, we can see that both Hildegard and Thomas worked within the original idea of a fundamental equality and significant differentiation with relations between a woman and a man. Cardinal Newman captures the variation of two different approaches with a unity of type as follows: "... [T]his unity of type, characteristic as it is of faithful developments, must not be pressed to the extent of denying all variation, nay, considerable alteration of proportion and relation, as time goes on, in the parts or aspects of an idea..."²³ Thus, we see from St. Augustine through St. Hildegard to St.

²² W. Norris Clarke, S.J., *Person and Being* (Marquette: University Press, 1993), 15. While Father Clarke argues for the relationality of all beings, my own approach is to restrict my analysis to the relationality of human beings. We both agree, however, on the role that Thomas Aquinas plays in establishing this principle.

²³ Newman, *An Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine*, 173.

Thomas Aquinas, the filling of the first two principles of Newman's test for the true development of an idea holding firm: 1) maintaining the original identity and preservation of type through all apparent changes and vicissitudes from first to last and 2) continuity of principles in the type in spite of changes in the process of development so that the changes do not change the type.

Sum
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Break and discussion

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Later medieval and Renaissance Philosophy

Why do Woman and Man's Identity need *hylomorphism* now?

The metaphysical principle of *hylomorphism*, represented here by the phrase 'form/matter composite,' is an essential element in a woman and a man's identity. *Hylomorphism* holds that every concrete thing is a real composite of specified or signate material (*hyle*) and particular kind of form (*morphe*). It is also foundational for a theory of integral gender complementarity. Applying this principle to our topic makes the composite unity of an existing person primary. In addition, a person can be analyzed philosophically either from the perspective of the material dimension of his or her identity or from the perspective of her central organizing form.

The metaphysical form/matter distinction identifies a fundamental dimension of all bodies, of living beings, and of living human beings: women and men. In any material thing the matter, or what the thing is made of, can be distinguished from the form, or the organizing principle which makes the thing the kind of thing it is. In the Aristotelian metaphysical tradition all women and men have the same human form, but each woman and each man is differentiated from the others by the specific matter that his or her form uniquely organizes. The form of the human being is also called the human soul, and the matter of the human being is also referred to as the individual human body.

The metaphysical principal of *hylomorphism* is both ontological, i.e. about how a real person women is in the world, and epistemological, i.e., about how we come to know what a person is. Since an existing woman has a formal aspect to her identity, the mind is able to know what she is when the intellect grasps her form by cognition and abstraction. Using a beautiful

metaphor drawn from woman's identity, Rev. W. Norris Clarke, S.J. observes in *The One and the Many: A Contemporary Thomistic Metaphysics*: "If there are no form/matter compositions in reality, then we cannot abstract form from matter and so cannot form general or universal concepts which, though abstract, still retain an umbilical cord of direct connection with the real."²⁴ This *umbilical cord* of the form/matter distinction is essential to the concept of woman and to a theory of integral gender complementarity.

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Cardinal Newman captures the variation of two different approaches with a unity of type as follows: "... [T]his unity of type, characteristic as it is of faithful developments, must not be pressed to the extent of denying all variation, nay, considerable alteration of proportion and relation, as time goes on, in the parts or aspects of an idea."²⁵ Thus, we see from St. Augustine though St. Hildegard to St. Thomas Aquinas, the filling of the first two principles of Newman's test for the true development of an idea holding firm (1) maintaining the original identity and preservation of type through all apparent changes and vicissitudes from first to last and (2) continuity of principles in the type in spite of changes in the process of development so that the changes do not change the type.

²⁴ Clarke, *The One and the Many*, 107. My emphasis.

²⁵ Newman, *An Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine*, 173.

The Battle for Truth and against Error in the Public Domain

We see in all these three early Catholic authors, what Newman refers to as the 'third note of a true development: the assimilative power of dogmatic truth', especially with respect to the Resurrection of the Body in the communion of saints and Creation in the image and likeness of the Holy Trinity. Newman describes this characteristic of assimilation in his usual pithy way:

That there is a truth then; that there is one truth; ... that the search for truth is not the gratification of curiosity; ... that truth and falsehood are set before us for the trial of our hearts; that our choice is an awful giving forth of lots on which salvation or rejection is inscribed; that "before all things it is necessary to hold the Catholic faith," that "he that would be saved must thus think," and not otherwise; that "if thou criest after knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for understanding... and find the knowledge of God,"--- This is the dogmatical principle, which has strength.²⁶

In the next phase of historical development of complementarity, we enter into a period of conflict. Again Newman identifies this struggle in the phase of the assimilative power of an idea:

That Christianity on the rise was in these circumstances of competition and controversy, is sufficiently evident...: it was surrounded by rites, sects, and philosophies, which contemplated the same questions, sometimes advocated the same truths, and in no slight degree wore the same external appearance. It could not stand still; it could not take its own way; and let them take theirs; they came across its path, and a conflict was inevitable.²⁷

The Battle for Complementarity moves into the public realm in Renaissance Humanism: Christine de Pizan and Others

The most specific development in Renaissance Catholicism was the springing up of several different examples of schools and dialogues which included women and men together discussing various humanist and feminist topics. The main goal was to remove obstacles to women's higher education, which had been available in the Benedictine tradition, but were lost

²⁶ Newman. *An Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine*, 357.

²⁷ Newman, *An Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine*, 355.

in the developments of universities for men students only. Many of the authors referred to Platonic arguments for women's equal access to education with men. Informal dialogues in the homes of wealthy patrons included both women and men participants,

If we say that Thomas Aquinas began to break open the faulty Aristotelian metaphysical arguments for polarity by his renewed hylomorphism, we can also say that Christine de Pizan and other Renaissance authors broke open the faulty Aristotelian arguments for women's inferior use of the mind in the categories of wisdom and virtue. Thus, Thomas, Christine de Pizan, and others moved the battle for a thoroughgoing defense of complementarity significantly forward in the historical period of 1300-1600. Once again integral gender complementarity was poised to find its deeper footings in the history of Catholic thought.

Reaching way back to the fifth century an imaginary figure of a wise and virtuous women was depicted by the Christian Stoic Boethius in his development of Lady Philosophy in the extremely popular text, Consolation of Philosophy. Shortly after Thomas Aquinas, Dante also described an imaginary Beatrice, who reasoned with him as he travelled through purgatory in The Divine Comedy. Nearly at the same time, Boccaccio wrote the first history of women, Concerning Famous Women, which offered multiple examples of intelligent women using their reason well.

During this same historical period, several women religious authors began to write about their own identities (St. Mechtild, St. Gertrude, Elsbeth Stagel, St. Brigit of Sweden, St. Catherine of Siena, and Blessed Julian of Norwich). Several of these women worked in close collaboration with men, in chaste complementary relationships.

On the other side of developments, some vicious satires against women, flowing from exaggerated polarity theories, also circulated widely. These satires worked by either

1) exaggerating traditional polarity characteristics or by ^{2/}inverting traditional male/female association with particular characteristics. Women were ridiculed as passive, unable to control their emotions, or as cunning and leading men to their ruin. Marriage was depicted as a trap to destroy men. The *Malleus maleficarum* integrated Aristotelian arguments to use in witchcraft accusations and trials.

Into this fluctuating historical context stepped Christine de Pizan (1344-1430), a Catholic mother and widow. Jean Gerson, the rector of the University of Paris gave her access to the libraries of the Sorbonne, in Paris. Christine de Pizan translated portions of *St. Thomas' commentary on Aristotle's Metaphysics* from Latin to French and Boccaccio's *Concerning Famous Women* into French. She became the author of 41 books, many of which used poetic arguments, rhetorical arguments, dialectical arguments and demonstrative arguments to defend woman's identity and Catholic marriage against their devaluation by satirists and others.²⁸

Christine de Pizan's unique contribution to proving the complementarity of woman and man was her extensive use of logical arguments to demonstrate by public letters and published original works, where men's arguments that devalued women were fallacious and/or false. [See Appendix 3] Thus, she was clearing the ground for the positive proof of the fundamental equality of dignity of men and women. Her argument forms included identifying fallacy of generalization, *modus tollens* (negating the consequent), counter examples to a universal claim, arguments for conclusions of reasonable demonstration, argument by clarification, argument about relation of whole and parts, argument about relation of cause to remote effect, and arguments of the *reductio ad absurdum* (RAA) form. One of her most famous works is a depiction of *The City of Ladies*, analogically drawn from Aristotle's *Politics* and St. Augustine's

²⁸ COW II, 538-539.

City of God, and filled with famous virtuous and wise women of the past, and ruled over by Mary, Queen of Heaven. Christine de Pizan in her City of Ladies, developing a new foundation for the complementarity of men and women, for her entire text is written in dialogue with texts authored by men, yet she is reinterpreting them for an audience of both women and men. She uses three personifications, Lady Reason, Lady Rectitude, and Lady Justice, to prove that derogatory concepts of women are false and to construct a city of women as models of virtue and wisdom, who are ready to serve the common good.²⁹

✓ Christine de Pizan can also be considered the first 'feminist' within the context of a humanism. I offer as a heuristic definition of humanism, "the organized thought and action about what a human being really is and can become." Similarly, a heuristic definition of feminism will be "the organized thought and action which aims at removing obstacles for a woman to become (as a woman) what a human being or a human person really is and can become."

The first form of humanism to consider is Renaissance humanism. While Erasmus (c. 1466-1536) is thought to be the first person to actually call himself "a humanist", Francis Petrarch has been described retrospectively as the "first great representative" of humanism because of his influence on the subsequent development of humanism.³⁰ The Latin term *humanus* includes three meanings: 1) whatever is characteristic of the human being (i.e., what is 'really human'), 2) especially one who is benevolent ("humane"), and 3) one who is learned or uses speech well

²⁹ Allen. *COW II*, 610-654. De Pizan's works were so extensive that in Volume II, the entire chapter 5 of 120 pages, *COW II* 537-658, is dedicated to their analysis. I will speak more about her in the Third Stafford Lecture.

³⁰ Paul Oskar Kristeller, *Eight Philosophers of the Italian Renaissance* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1964), p. 5.

("humanist").³¹ In the works of Petrarch we find a further meaning of humanist, namely (4) a person who has received and who gives a classical education.

When we turn to answer the more specific question of whether a Renaissance feminism can be a humanism, we have to note first of all that the words "feminism" and "feminist" did not come into use until after the nineteenth century.³² Certainly, if we reserve the words to apply only to a movement or an ideology of political action of groups of women, then there is no Renaissance feminism to bring into conjunction with humanism. On the other hand, if we allow the words to apply to women (or men) who engaged in some public action specifically aimed at improving the situation of women in the world at that time by removing perceived obstacles to the exercise of women's freedom to become really human (as women), then we can say that there were Renaissance feminists.

"Renaissance feminism" confronted those things which interfere with women's being able to become really human. Christine de Pisan in particular confronted the devaluation of woman by some men (satirists) who reduce her either to a passive object to be possessed (a rose to be plucked) or to an irrational animal-like being who is filled with vice. In either reduction, woman is considered not really human. All of Christine's arguments seek to demonstrate the falsity of the grounds for these assertions.

The grounds to which she appeals include logic (finding fallacies in her opponents' reasoning), historical authorities who cite examples of women who serve as counter examples

³¹ See Vito R. Giustiniani, "Homo, Humanus, and the Meanings of 'Humanism'," *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 46, 2 (April-June, 1985): 167-195.

³² Beatrice Gottlieb, "The Problem of Feminism in the Fifteenth Century," *Women of the Medieval World: Essays in Honor of John H. Mundy*, eds. Julius Kirshner and Suzanne F. Wemple (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1985), pp. 337-364.

(Petrarch, Boccaccio, Plutarch, etc.), and God (e.g., she begins the *City of Ladies* by attempting to demonstrate, by a series of *reductio ad absurdum* arguments, that woman cannot be evil because she was created by God who is a good artisan). The appeal both to historical authorities and to creation by God is common to the early feminist humanists as two prime foundations for women being as really human as are men. Christine de Pisan also includes multiple appeals to her own experience of women to back up her claims.

Christine is an example of a feminist who is interested in the full development of all persons—all men, all women, and all children—though she emphasizes that women are most often blocked in their development as full human beings. This pattern of defense of a woman's human identity is found in other Renaissance humanists as well. Isotta Nogarola (1418-1466) and Ludovico Foscarini together wrote a three-level dialogue about whether Eve or Adam was more guilty for the Fall of humanity.³³ Laura Cereta (1469-1499), a third order Dominican, engaged in dialogue with humanists about the moral life from her home in Brescia.³⁴

The most specific development in Renaissance Catholicism was the springing up of several different examples of schools and dialogues which included women and men together discussing various humanist and feminist topics. The main goal was to remove obstacles to women's higher education, which had been available in the Benedictine tradition, but were lost in the developments of universities for men students only. Many of the authors referred to Platonic arguments for women's equal access to education with men. Informal dialogues in the homes of wealthy patrons included both women and men participants.

Lucrezia Marinelli in her book, *On the Nobility and Excellence of Women* (1601), directly engaged the arguments of philosophers, such as Aristotle, holding that women were more

³³ See COW II 944-69.

³⁴ See COW II 969-1045.

virtuous than men, and that men were more vicious than women. Her several hundred page text is the first by a woman or man to engage directly with the specific arguments of Aristotle that had been the backbone for sex and gender polarity.³⁵ Moreover, in 1622, Marie de Gournay le Jars (1566-1645) published Egalité des hommes et des femmes, a text which appealed to the authority of Plato and Socrates for equality rights for women and men. She also appealed to the creation story in *Genesis* to defend her claim that women and men's virtue is "one and the same thing."³⁶ Through appeals to authority, as well as to philosophical argument, these early feminists were able to make the claim that women are of equal dignity to men.

Renaissance Catholic women not only engaged directly with philosophical arguments of their predecessors, especially with respect to false or distorted positions on women's identity, they also participated in and wrote many dialogues about other topics in general. In the later Renaissance there were many versions of different theories about women's identity, some of which introduced some new distortions in the history of gender analysis. Neo Platonist approaches introduced a new momentum towards unisex theories or fractional complementarity theories. Notable here are the writings of Nicholas of Cusa (1401-1464), Marsilio Ficino (1433-1499) and Giovanni Pico della Mirandola (1469-1494). ✓

In the later Renaissance a new theory of sex and gender identity began to be articulated. ✓
Reverse sex and gender polarity, or the argument that woman is naturally superior to man, was defended by Henrich (Cornelius Agrippa) (1486-1536). He argued that since each kind of being created was superior to the previous one, and since woman was created last, the female

³⁵ See COW III, Chapter Two, Section A5.

³⁶ Marie de Gournay, *Egalité des hommes et des femmes* in *La fille d'Alliance de Montaigne: Marie de Gournay* (Paris: Librairie Honore Champion, 1910), p. 70. In *Grief des Dames*, also published in 1626, she made the same twin appeal to the authority of Platonic philosophers and God to defend woman's dignity against what she perceived as the deprivation of her liberty and goods by some men.

must be superior to the male. It was also defended by **Lucretia Marinella** who argued that women's virtues were superior to men's and men's vices were worse than women's therefore women are superior to men.

The seed of complementarity was planted in good soil, however, as in the next very long phase of absence of theoretical arguments in its favor, individual men and women began, in the counter-reformation to practice a real spiritual complementarity in relations of friendship in Christ. the Catholic inspiration for gender complementarity burst forth in the Counter-Reformation in two spiritual developments: 1) **complement apostolates of Catholic men and women, and 2) devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus and Immaculate Heart of Mary.**

✓ Working together in relations of complementarity in the sixteenth century were the Spanish Carmelites, St. Teresa of Avila (1518-1582) and St. John of the Cross (1542-1591); in seventeenth century France, St. Vincent de Paul (1581-1660) and the foundress of the Daughters of Charity, Louise de Marillac (1591-1660); and the founder of the Salesians St. Francis de Sales (1567-1622) and the foundress of the Visitation Nuns, St. Jeanne de Chantal (1572-1641). In the New World: The Ursuline Blessed Marie of the Incarnation (1599-1672) came from France to Quebec City in 1639; she founded a school for girls working with Bishop François de Laval (d. 1708) and frequently met with Jesuit missionaries, some of whom became the North American Martyrs. Then in 1642 the lay Catholic Paul Chomedey de Maisonneuve co-founded the city of Ville Marie de Montreal with Jeanne Mance, a nurse and St. Marguerite Bourgeois (1630-1700), founder of the Sisters of Notre Dame, a non-cloistered community of educators. She also opened the first free schools in North America, and her community founded Marianopolis, the first college for women in North America.

Fr. Ian Ker, Newman's biographer, in his forward to *The Essay on Development of Christian Doctrine* introduced an important distinction between explicit conscious knowledge and implicit knowledge as

... the key to understanding his idea of development. For the fact that the Apostolic Church was not 'conscious' of later dogmas does not necessarily mean that she was not unconsciously cognizant of them, in the sense that she had an implicit though not explicit knowledge of them. As Newman put it in "The Theory of Developments in Religious Doctrine," "It is no proof that persons are not possessed, because they are not conscious, of an idea."³⁷

I would argue that the examples of men and women of the Renaissance and the Counter-reformation, working together in relations of chaste intergender complementarity represent just such an implicit understanding of the true principle of the integral complementarity of woman and man.

³⁷ Ian Ker, foreword to Newman, *An Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine*, xxiii. Referring back to Newman's "The Theory of Developments in Religious Doctrine," in *Oxford University Sermons*. 321.

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